

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 VO-03 SCA-01 SR-02 ORM-03 INR-11

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FM AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN, PFOR, BU, OVIP (POPOV, IVAN)

SUBJECT: DIVIDED FAMILIES

REF: SOFIA 1212

1. DURING EMBOFF MEETING JULY 19 WITH MFA CONSULAR OFFICER (KUMANOV) ON ANOTHER SUBJECT, LATTER RAISED DIVIDED FAMILY QUESTION. HE REPORTED THAT OF 69 CASES ON LIST WE PRESENTED TO MFA IN MID-APRIL, BULGARIAN "COMPETENT AUTHORITIES" HAD FOUND THAT FIFTY HAD EITHER NOT APPLIED FOR EXIT PERMISSION OR HAD NOT DONE SO RECENTLY. ALL OF THE REMAINING 19, ACCORDING TO KUMANOV, HAD BEEN DENIED EXIT PERMISSION ON GROUND THEIR SPONSORS HAD "BETRAYED BULGARIA" BY LEAVING THE COUNTRY ILLEGALLY OR HAVING FAILED TO RETURN FOLLOWING AN AUTHORIZED STAY ABROAD.

2. ASKED WHETHER HIS PRESENTATION SHOULD BE VIEWED AS AN OFFICIAL GOB RESPONSE ON THIS QUESTION WHICH HAD BEEN RAISED BY USG AT A VERY HIGH LEVEL, KUMANOV SAID IT WAS NOT AND SHOULD BE VIEWED ONLY AS "INFORMATION". IN INFORMAL ATMOSPHERE PREVAILING AT MEETING, EMBOFF OBSERVED THAT IT SHOULD BE NO SURPRISE THAT THE 19 WERE FOUND TO BE RELATIVES OF "ILLEGAL EMIGRANTS" AND THAT UN-

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DOUBTEDLY OTHER 50 CASES ALSO INVOLVED ILLEGAL EMIGRA-

TION.

3. IN LIGHT OF THIS UNPROMISING DEVELOPMENT, AMBASSADOR WHEN HE SAW VICE PREMIER POPOV JULY 23 MENTIONED THAT IN CONNECTION WITH HIS VISIT IN THE US HE WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE QUESTIONED ABOUT DIVIDED FAMILIES, GIVEN CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN THIS PROBLEM. ALSO RECALLED THAT SECRETARY DENT HAD RAISED THIS MATTER WITH CHAIRMAN ZHIVKOV; POINTED OUT THAT LITTLE IS KNOWN IN AMERICA ABOUT BULGARIA, AND SOME SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN ONLY KNOW THAT BULGARIAN FAMILY MEMBERS OF SOME OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS ARE BEING PREVENTED FROM JOINING THEM.

4. POPOV SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO MATTER AND THAT IT SEEMED A MINOR ONE SINCE SO FEW BULGARIANS HAD EMIGRATED TO THE US. AMBASSADOR SAID POPOV WOULD PROBABLY FIND THAT FACT THAT SOME OF THOSE BULGARIANS HAD LEFT THE COUNTRY WITHOUT PERMISSION WAS AN ELEMENT CAUSING DIFFICULTY. IN THAT CASE, POPOV SAID, THINGS ARE MORE COMPLICATED. HE SHOWED AWARENESS, HOWEVER, THAT IT COULD CAST A CLOUD OVER HIS VISIT, WHICH WOULD NOT BE IN HIS INTEREST. HERZ

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